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MEASURES TO ELIMINATE INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-fifth year

Letter dated 14 February 2000 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a letter addressed to you by Mr. Farouk Al-Shara', Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Syrian Arab Republic, conveying Syria's position with regard to document A/54/744-S/2000/98, which concerns the Israeli aggression against Lebanon of 8 February 2000, and addressing the false allegations made therein and its attempt to mislead the international community.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 34 and 160, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mikhail WEHBE
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

ANNEX

Letter dated 14 February 2000 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Syrian Arab Republic addressed to the Secretary-General

In his letter dated 9 February 2000 addressed to you (A/54/744-S/2000/98, annex), Foreign Minister David Levy tries to provide justification for the attacks launched against Lebanon by the lethal Israeli war machine on 8 February 2000 that left many casualties among innocent civilians and caused heavy damage to power stations. That the Minister should cast blame on others is an irrational and illogical evasion of responsibility for this wanton aggression. Even more serious is the fact that his letter conveys a threat of further aggression and of recourse to military action against Lebanon. Israel's chief diplomat not only went so far as to threaten the use of force but went on to appear in person on the world's television screens with the promise to burn and destroy Lebanon.

Israel thus confirms its contempt for the principles of international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant Security Council resolutions, specifically resolution 425 (1978) requiring Israel to withdraw its forces forthwith and unconditionally from all Lebanese territory, a resolution that was adopted some 22 years ago.

The Minister's letter characterizes the actions of the Lebanese national resistance as terrorism that must be curbed by the Lebanese and Syrian Governments. It seeks to ignore the fact that resistance to foreign occupation is a legitimate right enshrined in international covenants and exercised by the peoples of the world throughout history. While Israel tries to portray its aggression as an act of legitimate self-defence, it is in reality an "act in defence of aggression". Israel's arrogance of power has reached such an extent that the aggressor is transformed into a victim and the actual victim, defending its territory on its own soil, has become, in Israel's understanding, an aggressor.

The international community addressed the explosive situation in southern Lebanon, and for that purpose established a group to monitor the understanding of April 1996. The Minister's letter seeks to eliminate the role of the monitoring group, refers to the understanding by the name given to a previous Israeli act of aggression against the people of Lebanon and threatens new and more widespread aggression against more than one country in the region.

Syria, which is a member of the monitoring group established by the April understanding, continues to support and honour the understanding and holds Israel responsible for impeding the work of the group and disrupting its meetings. Consequently, for the Minister to assert that Syria will be responsible for halting the Syrian-Israeli negotiations should resistance to the occupation in southern Lebanon continue is to mislead the international community and thwart the achievement of that peace that Syria has made its strategic choice.

The meetings held in Shepherdstown, West Virginia, from 3 to 10 January 2000 demonstrated that Israel is not willing to withdraw from the Syrian territory it occupied in 1967 and is not willing to draw the boundaries on that basis, despite the fact that Syria and the international community are committed to a just and comprehensive peace in implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and to the principle of land for peace. It is more than ever obvious that Israel is not content merely to disrupt the peace process and deprive it of its substance but that it also seeks to utilize its enormous military capacities instead of the political means set forth in the resolutions of the United Nations and in its Charter.

(Signed) Farouk AL-SHARA'
Minister for Foreign Affairs

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